
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING — SEPTEMBER 2023

The Transportation Commission met for an informal workshop on September 12, 2023, in Ames. The Commission discussed the following actions:

Director's Welcome. The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) Director, Scott Marler, provided opening comments to the Commission regarding updates on the ongoing Boards and Commissions Review Committee meetings and the report of the status of Iowa bridges in poor condition. According to Director Marler, most bridges in poor condition are on the secondary road system, but there are 26 bridges on the primary road system that are classified as in poor condition. Of those 26 bridges, 21 are included in the DOT's five-year [Iowa Transportation Improvement Program](#) report. Iowa ranks seventh in the nation for total number of bridges.

Administrative Rules. The DOT provided an update on an administrative rulemaking regarding special permits for the operation and movement of vehicles and loads of excess size and weight. This rulemaking implements 2022 Iowa Acts, House File [2518](#) (Crane, Annual Permit Act), and 2022 Iowa Acts, Senate File [2376](#) (Overweight Vehicle Permits Act). As of September 6, the DOT has issued 16 small crane permits and approximately 3,600 annual all-systems overweight permits. As of July 2023, there were 70 counties participating.

Washington, D.C. Trip. The DOT provided an update on the Commission's upcoming trip to Washington, D.C.

Transportation Trends Update. The DOT provided the following updates:

- For U.S. rail carloads, the six-week moving average in July 2023 was below the average in July 2022 and 2021. The DOT staff reported a decrease in grain carloads in July compared to previous years.
- For monthly passenger counts at Iowa's eight commercial service airports, the July 2023 monthly passenger counts were higher than counts for the same month in the previous four years.
- Monthly State vehicle miles of travel for July 2023 were lower than July 2019 and July 2021 but higher than July 2020 and July 2022.

2024 Highway Program Balance Report. The Commission received an update on the FY 2024 Highway Program Balance. The Program balance in August 2023 was negative \$24.0 million.

Transfer of Jurisdiction of Frontage/Access Roadways Along Iowa 461 in Davenport. The Commission received an overview on the transfer of jurisdiction of frontage and access roadways along Iowa 461 in Davenport.

Funding Recommendations. The Commission received an overview of funding recommendations for the following programs:

- State Recreational Trails Program — The [recommendations](#) include approximately \$2.8 million for seven separate projects.
- Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant Program — The [recommendations](#) include approximately \$2.7 million in loans and grants for two projects.
- FY 2025 Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Program — The [recommendations](#) include \$6.1 million for various projects.

- FY 2025 Highway-Railroad Crossing Surface Repair Program — The [recommendations](#) include \$951,000 for various projects.

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Update. The DOT provided an update on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program created in the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA). Under the IIJA, Iowa was allocated \$51.0 million over federal fiscal years 2022 through 2026. To access funding, states must submit a state deployment plan that is required to be approved by the Federal Highway Administration. The Iowa DOT, in coordination with the Iowa Economic Development Authority, submitted the initial plan on August 1, 2022, and a required annual update on August 1, 2023.

The Iowa DOT is currently in the process of developing and finalizing a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity and anticipates review of applications through spring 2024. Applications to the program are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80.0% of capital costs, and operating and maintenance costs across the five-year period are eligible for reimbursement up to 80.0% or \$200,000, whichever is less.

Highway Planning Overview. The Commission received an overview of the highway planning and programming process and the key metrics used to evaluate roadways across the State.

The Transportation Commission also met for a business meeting on September 12, 2023, in Ames. The Commission took the following actions:

- **Transfer of Jurisdiction of Frontage/Access Roadways Along Iowa 461 in Davenport.** The Commission approved the transfer of jurisdiction of frontage and access roadways along Iowa highway 461 in Davenport.
- **Administrative Rules.** The Commission approved the changes to 761 IAC [511](#) regarding special permits for operations and movement of vehicles and loads of excess size and weight.

Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for October 10, 2023, in Okoboji.

LSA Staff Contact: Maria Wagenhofer (515.281.5270) maria.wagenhofer@legis.iowa.gov